
C A V E A T
ON THE PART OF
PUBLIC CREDIT.

[Price One Shilling.]

TABLE
OF THE PART OF
PUBLIC CREDIT.

[Price One Shilling]

A
C A V E A T
ON THE PART OF
PUBLIC CREDIT,
PREVIOUS TO THE OPENING OF THE
B U D G E T,
FOR THE PRESENT YEAR, 1768.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ALMON, opposite Burlington House, in Piccadilly.

MDCC LXVIII.

C A V A T

ON THE PART O

P U B L I C

PREVIOUS TO THE OPENING OF THE

B U D

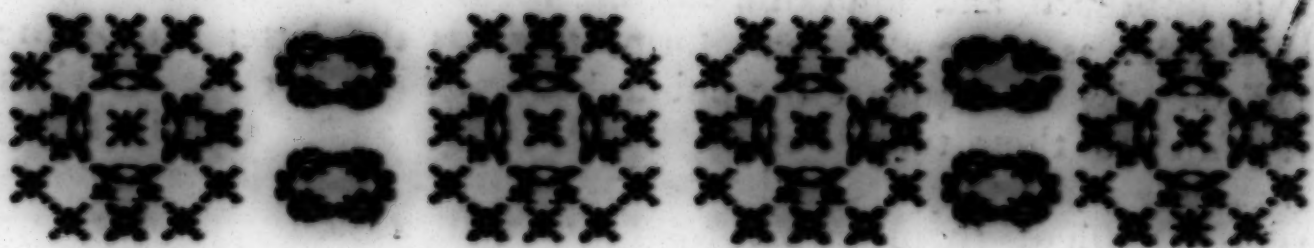


FOR THE

L O N D O N

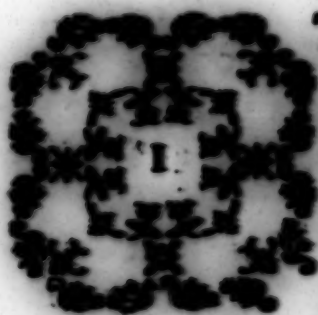
Printed by J. B. Nichols, 10, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

MDCCCXCV



A

CAVEAT, &c.



It is but seldom that we have an opportunity of discussing the measures of administration, with respect to the revenue, till they are so far pledged, that it is considered as a punctilio of honour not to recede from them, or to suffer any alteration or amendment to be made. The state of the funds for the time being, and the plan for the rising year, are kept as close as they can be, from the impertinent and jealous eye of what is called opposition, till the awful ceremony comes of revealing the mysteries of the Budget. This is generally some studied performance; a narrative *ex parte*, which very few of the hearers come prepared to examine or debate at sight. As it is a dry subject in itself, the orator of the day summons all his art and eloquence to make it entertaining as well as instructive. It is perhaps embellished with some pretty stories of bulls and bears, or tickets, or installments; or in its turn some profound maxim of œconomy is demonstrated, such as that paying your bills at Midsummer instead of Michaelmas, will save a quarter's interest, or

B

any

any other proposition equally subtle and surprising. In the mean time, the substantial parts of the plan, whether right or wrong, pass unheeded and unexamined, are voted, reported, enacted, all in a trice, as matters of mere form, towards the latter end of the session. By consequence the public have nothing left for it when it comes to their turn, but to arraign with anger and hostility, measures when they are past recalling, instead of having an opportunity to discuss them with temper and deliberation while they are yet *sub judice*, and capable of receiving light in the freedom of debate. As we have received very early information of the intended plan for this year, I shall enter into a friendly conference with administration, and whether I may suggest any thing pertinent to the subject or no, I shall at least have the satisfaction of having discharged the part of a well-wisher to my country, in submitting my sentiments upon this important subject with candour and deference. It is necessary to state two or three preliminary estimates, but I will endeavour to keep all minute matters of figures as clear as possible from the main body of the argument, in which every man of plain sense is as competent a judge as the best arithmetician. The administration have given notice that they will pay off 875,000 l. of the national debt at Midsummer next, though the arrears and deficiency of the last year (1767) amount to a full million, and consequently this measure cannot be effected consistently with other services, but by still deeper arrears and anticipations. Surely it cannot be sound policy to hold out fallacious appearances of doing more than we have it in our power effectively to do; for to talk of paying debts by running into arrears, is a contradiction in the very terms. All therefore that I have to plead for is, a little more regard to fundamentals, and consideration of the *esse quam videri*. But I will not anticipate the main argument any farther than to suggest, that this maxim, which I take for my standard, is a very plain one, requires no depth of science to comprehend, nor (I trust) any farther recommendation than the fairness of its own countenance.

I shall

I shall follow the plan of this year, as it has been opened to us; the first part connects the current establishment with the discharge of one quarter part of the wine and cyder annuities, which therefore are presumed to be discharged out of the surplus of the establishment. The second part of the plan is to pay off the whole remainder of those annuities by a new loan, or in other words, to reduce them by the assistance of a lottery, &c. from 4 per cent. to 3.

We will now proceed to the supply for 1768.

* Establishment, as it has been stated by authority	£.
Deficiency of last year's grants, as stated likewise by authority	3,300,000
+ Deficiency of land and malt-tax for 1766, to be made good	390,000
Sums to be replaced to the sinking fund	550,000
To discharge Exchequer bills	210,000
Interest of Exchequer bills to be charged on 1768	1800,000
To discharge 4 per cents	54,000
	875,000
Total supply	7,179,000

Ways and means for 1768.

Land and malt-tax	2,250,000
Exchequer bills	1,800,000
American revenue, &c. effective money, suppose	50,000
	4,100,000

The

* This is exclusive of the militia, or any provision for extra's of the naval service.

† The deficiency of the land and malt-tax for the year 1766, which will come to be made good out of the present year's supply, will be about 550,000 l. It has been customary to allow 300,000 l. for these two articles, but there is no occasion for an estimate, as we can see by Castaigne's paper pretty near to a certainty what the amount will actually be. In that paper we find, that to the 15th day of January 1768, the malt-

The remainder being 3,079,000l. to compleat the sum of the supply, must come from the East-India company, and out of the sinking-fund. The East-India money (the last payment of which is not to come in till a year and three quarters hence) will altogether amount to 800,000l. therefore there remains 2,279,000l. to come out of the sinking-fund. This draught upon the sinking-fund, added to an arrear of between 500,000l. and 600,000l. which is already upon it, make together an anticipation of more than 2,800,000l. for the present year. This is a monstrous anticipation, and beyond any thing that has ever been heard or thought of. How are we the nearer by finding the sinking-fund as much in arrear at the end of the year, as the amount of the debt intended to be discharged by this measure? On the contrary, of all the parts of the public revenue, it is most advisable to keep the sinking-fund free and beforehand, to serve as a resource in case of accidents, as a bank to draw upon for the support and protection of public credit, if any flurry should happen. The sinking-fund cannot possibly discharge itself till Midsummer twelvemonth; how much longer it may be, no one can possibly ensure, for the condition upon which we are to receive the East-India money, is, to repay the whole, or any proportional part to the company, out of the sinking-fund, if, by the fortune of war, they should become deprived of the Indian territories, at, or before any of the respective times of payment. These are such casualties, as I am sure no wise man ought to take account upon, without some prudential reservation. But even if the India money should be forthcoming in due time, as I hope is most probable, yet, in the interim, you must take it up upon some bills of credit or other,

malt-tax of 1766 had only produced 477,000l. instead of 750,000l. Between that day and the 25th of next March, being the last quarter, I cannot suppose that much more should remain to come in, by consequence the deficiency of the malt-tax 1766, will amount to 260,000 or 270,000l.

The land-tax of 1765 was 228,000l. deficient, because the militia for 1765 was paid out of it; but the militia for 1766 was not only paid but clothed out of the land-tax 1766, therefore the deficiency will be 50, or 60,000l. more; and by comparing in Cassaigne's paper, the produce of the land-tax 1766, with that of 1765, date for date, it appears to be as much as that behind-hand. Upon the whole of these two articles, I shall take account for 550,000l.

for

for even the second payment is not to be made till three months after the annuities are to be discharged.

Great stress has been laid upon the merit of paying these annuities at Midsummer instead of Michaelmas, as shewing zeal for the public credit, and the reduction of the national debt; but it equally argues a thriftless principle of running into arrear, an imprudent risque of depending upon money that may never be the public's, and above all, the great impolicy of cutting off the nation's best resource, the sinking-fund, for a year and a half to come.

If it were essential to this argument, to give an accurate estimate of the sinking fund, I would do it here; but it would only divert our attention from the main point, to a circumstantial one; for whether it should produce 100,000 *l.* more or less, can only make the difference of a month sooner or later, that it may work itself clear; whereas the contrast that I would wish to have felt is, between the credit and security of having our resources ready, a sinking-fund free, or half a year in advance, instead of loading it for an age to come; however, I will just make one remark in passing by.

It was the vogue two or three years ago, to speak of the sinking-fund as greatly risen in its produce, but now as it has this last year fallen off from that expectation, we are all despondence. I will explain what I take to be the cause of this variation. When the sinking-fund seemed to be in a rising way, the encrease was observed to come upon the articles of customs, from hence it was instantly inferred, that the return of peace had brought this encrease; but if we look more narrowly into the matter, I think this cause will hardly stand the test, for the nett revenue of the customs does finally depend (equally as the excise) upon the domestic consumption of such articles as are charged with duties. If the consumption of malt, hops, brandy, &c. &c. should encrease, the excise will rise; and by parity of reason, if we consume more sugar, wine, tobacco, coals, tea, foreign linens, muslins, spices, silks,

silks, calicoes, hemp, iron, &c. * the customs will encrease; but if no probable reason can be given why these articles should encrease so suddenly, there is room to suspect, that we have been too hasty in our conclusion, and that peace and the encrease of the customs are not to be depended upon as cause and certain consequence to each other, although, by taking things in a lump, they seemed to chime very well together. This was the reasoning that led me at the time to suspect some fallacy in the matter. The following account, which I did not get sight of till the year 1766, will set this out of question :

Years.	Net produce of the customs.	Payments into the Exchequer.
1760	2,295,000	1,969,000
1761	1,480,000	1,858,000
1762	1,729,000	1,854,000
1763	2,967,000	2,247,000
1764	2,001,000	2,159,000
1765	2,071,000	2,334,000

By this account we see (supposing the par of the customs to be 2,000,000, which I take not to be far from the mark) that 1763, being the first year of peace, in which all our foreign effects were to be brought home from ceded places, &c. yielded 967,000 *l.* above par; had all this been paid into the Exchequer in the same year, it would have pointed too notoriously to its cause to have been misunderstood; but as the receipt of this extra sum was spread over the three or four following years, it was much more excusable not to distinguish it from a gradual and permanent improvement.

The cause of the present falling off of the revenue seems to be this; the customs are returned nearly to their par (though the stoppage of the bounty upon corn keeps them rather above just for the present) and the late dearthness of malt has effected the brewery and distillery, which are, together, two-thirds of the whole excise.

I dare

* I have selected these articles, just to convey some intelligent idea of the customs; for tho' the book of rates is a chaos of 3000 articles, yet these few produce at least four-fifths of the revenue.

I dare hope that this will prove but a temporary defalcation. Upon the whole matter, the medium estimate cannot fail in the long run to be nearest to the truth; for though revenues, which depend upon the consumption of foreign and domestic articles, may be liable to fluctuate, yet, upon the ballance, they must follow the measure of national riches and population, which, thank God, in a great kingdom, are not so fickle as the hopes and fears, the exultation and despondence of short-sighted politicians. So much for the sinking-fund, and for the unmerciful anticipation of it for the present year.

I think it can hardly be urged with any weight in defence of this measure, that the annuities proposed to be discharged carry 4 *l. per cent.* for that will not make the sinking-fund produce its surplus faster than according to its natural course. If the money was actually forthcoming, we should save the whole 4 *l. per cent.* but if we are to take up the money upon credit, because the funds are in arrear, we are then only striving for the difference; and the utmost that we can hope for will be, to save a poor 5000 *l.* at the price of discrediting and distressing the public service in every branch. I think we might grow wiser from very recent experience, for the treasury have been all the winter grievously complaining of the evil that I speak of, from the deficiency and arrears of the last year's funds.

I now come to the second part of the plan, which, as yet is only in contemplation, *viz.* the discharging 1,750,000 *l.* of 4 *per cents.* by a mortgage at 3 *per cent.* upon the same fund; *viz.* the duties of wine and cyder. I presume these duties will yield 80,000 *l.* a year, and consequently be more than sufficient to lodge 1,750,000 *l.* upon at 3 *per cent.* This fund would serve for 2,500,000 *l.* if so much can be got at 3 *l. per cent.* I think I have demonstrated above, that the first payment of the 4 *per cents.* at Midsummer, cannot possibly be discharged upon the establishment, without incurring a monstrous arrear of the sinking-fund; would it not therefore be more prudent to spare, in that respect, and to take up any sum, under 2,500,000 *l.* that can be had at 3 *per cent.* The excess, whatever it might be, above 1,750,000 *l.* would operate in abatement of that severe anticipation of the sinking-fund that I plead against;
but

but if it should be in contemplation to take up no more money upon the wine and cyder of 1763, than the 1,750,000 *l.* of which this fund remains to be discharged, so that the sinking-fund shall be left by itself, to support the brunt of all the rest; I think the administration will find themselves set fast in the middle of their undertaking, to the injury of their own reputation, and the great discouragement of public credit under such patronage.

Thus far I have confined myself to the practicability of the measures destined for the service of the instant year. I will now consider whether (if they were practicable) they have in themselves the most probable tendency to uphold the state of public credit. As this argument will lead me out of the road of common topics, into untrodden ground, I shall offer what I have to say in the stile of queries and suggestions for consideration, and not to invite contest but enquiry. The great object in view this year is, to reduce, as it is called, the redeemable 4 *per cents.* to 3; but in what sense can it be said that they are *reduced*, or upon what terms of advantage to the public? The only light in which I can see this measure is, that they are *bought out* at the market price. If the 3 *per cents.* are 10 or 12 *per cent.* below par, you give each subscriber 10 or 12 *l.* in the hundred to make him content with an annuity of 3 *l.* The premium upon the tickets, together with allowance for discount, and sometimes advanced interest, amount generally to 170,000 *l.* or 180,000 *l.* this is parcelled out among the subscribers of 1,500,000 *l.* (I allude to the subscriptions of the last two or three years) to prevail with them to take 3 *per cent.* A bargain at open market is generally supposed pretty nearly ballanced; in these cases the turn of the scale is rather against government, that the loan may bear some premium; so that I am at a loss to see any advantage that the public gains. They have 180,000 *l.* of what is money's-worth to dispose of (for a lottery, with discount, &c. may be turned into money an hundred ways) and they chuse to lay it out in buying up a redeemable annuity of 1 *per cent.* which annuity would fall in of itself if we could take the thing by the other end, and restore 3 *per cents.* to par before the reduction; that I would call reducing indeed. In the year 1750, Mr. Pelham gave no 10, or 12 *l.* in the hundred, to invite the proprietors of more than 50,000,000 *l.* to accept 3 *per cent.* but he said, Gentlemen, take the annuity I offer you, or your money.

According to our modern plan, we may reduce any thing to 3 per cent. if we will buy out the difference, but a bargain is a bargain, and what we save we have paid for. We are giving 180,000l. of money's-worth for three or four years together, which might otherwise have been applied to the current service, or in aid of the sinking-fund (the guinea lottery of the year 1757, produced, I think, 220,000l. nett disposable money) to reduce scarcely a tenth part of what Mr. Pelham reduced without any such compensation, and what would have fallen in *gratis* to us, if we could have discovered the secret of bringing the 3 per cents to par previous to this measure: but it will be said; perhaps, that this very secret consists in discharging the redeemable 4 per cents, and that the measure is designed with that view; for I know it is a general opinion among the dealers in money, that it is the 4 per cents which stand in the way, and keep them down. As this is mere assertion, I might challenge the proof upon the rule *affirmanti incumbit probatio*; but whether these gentlemen can prove their assertion or no, yet it answers their end, it cooks up a loan and lottery year after year, which serve to keep trade a little alive in the Alley, during the dead time of peace; and if the loan bears a premium, it signifies very little to a broker where the 3 per cents stand. However, not to insist upon the privilege of defendant, if I can produce a case, in which between fifty and sixty millions of redeemable 4 per cents did not, in similar circumstances, prevent the 3 per cents from rising to par, I shall think myself entitled to conclude, that it cannot have been owing to six or seven millions of those annuities that the 3 per cents have not risen to par since the late peace. The period I allude to is in the year 1749, six months before Mr. Pelham's reduction, when the 3 per cents got to par in spite of the whole phalanx of near sixty millions of 4 per cents then outstanding, and so they continued till the eve of the late war. Had it been his task to buy out these fifty or sixty millions at 10 or 12 per cent. discount, he would have had but small comfort of his reduction; but that measure was the consequence of public credit rising, not the cause of it.

Experience is commonly said to procure wisdom, but it should be with this proviso, not to mistake the effect for it's cause; for that, in the properest sense of the proverb, is setting the cart to draw the horse.

D

I fear

I fear this has been our case, for it has been labour and sorrow in the course of four years (including 1768) to pay off, or buy out, a poor seven millions from 4 to 3 per cent. while Mr. Pelham, who took the proposition by the other end, wiped out a rent charge of 5, or 600,000*l.* a year, with a wet finger. Upon the whole of this argument, let the cause of the 3 per cents falling below par be what it may, I think myself warranted to conclude, that the redeemable 4 per cents are innocent of this disaster, and consequently, that we have not hit the nail upon the head in levelling our blow at them.

I do not assert in any part of this argument, that it is within the compass of ministerial policy to bring the 3 per cents to par, for there is no reason that I know of, in the nature of things, that this should be the par of, what I would call national commercial interest. These two points, viz. the rate of commercial interest, and the interest of money in the funds, are very intimately connected together, though not absolutely one and the same thing. I conceive if the rate of commercial interest be more than 3 per cent. that the 3 per cent. stocks will not rise to par; but the converse of this is not equally true, for though the current rate of interest would permit the 3 per cent. funds to rise to par, yet the ill policy of administration may keep them down, or too great a proportion of that specific kind of property in the kingdom may clog the market. The best symptom that I know of to hope that the 3 per cent. stocks might rise to par under proper management, is, that upon the peace they came very near to par; and so I think they would have continued, had it not being for a long after reckoning of ten or fifteen millions of arrears and debts, which were not then publicly known of. From that time to this, we have been over head and ears in deficiencies, loans, lotteries, navy-bills, Exchequer bills outstanding, and all the appearances (though in a less degree) of war, as far as relates to the funds. In the course of four or five years we have gradually lessened our incumbrances, and to that it is that I should attribute a little rise (and very little rise it is) that has obtained in public credit, much more than to the buying out the redeemable four *per cents*. To what precise point the 3 *per cents* would rise, if left to depend merely upon the circumstances inherent in the case, that is to say, to the
rate

rate of commercial interest, and the proportion that the public funds bear to the total amount of national property, in all other shapes, I will not take upon me to determine; but I would observe, that as the bank seems ready to circulate land and malt bills at 3 *per cent.* it should follow, that the rate of commercial interest is in their favour; and the other circumstance that I have mentioned of the 3 *per cents* shooting a head so near to par, upon the prospect of peace, would encourage us to hope that the quantity at market is not more than might be dispensed with, as the proportional part of stocks created since that time, is very small, compared with the total amount of them. I am the more inclined to suspect, that there is some original mistake in the plans of administration upon this subject, as the causes hitherto assigned for the drooping of public credit, do not carry the face of argument, and the remedies hitherto applied have not been attended with success.

The causes dependant upon administration, which will infallibly operate to distress the public funds, though every other circumstance should conspire to favour them, are, either the actual distress of government at the time being for want of money, or the prospect of coming to borrow upon the first flurry in foreign politics. Government is at present under the description of both cases, for year after year we are applying to the city for a new loan, and as things are destined, even in the year 1769, there will be an outstanding debt of the late war of between 2 and 3 millions, *viz.* 1800,000*l.* of exchequer bills, and a navy debt, the future amount of which, by this time twelvemonth, I cannot specify; but we know that the navy and victualling bills are at present eighteen months in arrear; this has not the face of affluence.

As to resources in case of public disturbance, where are they to be found? not in the deficiency of the last years grants; not in that navy debt which is eighteen months in arrear; not in those exchequer bills, which were issued for the service of the late war, and still on hand; not in a little India money, to be taken upon credit before it is due, and (who knows) perhaps to be refunded with interest; not in a sinking fund, mortgaged to those same 4 *per cents.* till Michaelmas twelvemonth. If there be any dependable resource let us know it.

it. The knowledge of any real and ostensible resource will cherish public credit more than big words and pretences. The gazette that pompously proclaims the payment of the national funded debt, and summons the creditors for the very earliest day, as if the treasury knew no other distress than where to cram their money in the interim; that same gazette betrays the disgraceful secret, that your tradesmen's bills for navy and victualling are eighteen months in arrear. This is a strange contrast between the pretence and the real fact! and yet the most certain consequence of a fallacious system and abortive means. I should think by this time we might be convinced upon experience as well as argument, that the plan of discharging or buying out funded annuities, in preference to providing for outstanding debts, does not operate effectively to the support of public credit. Is it not then astonishing that we should still persist upon the same system, plunging ourselves still deeper into arrear, anticipating every possible resource, *fine die*, and all this upon no better prospect than to grasp again at the same futile and delusive measures.

I suppose it would be lost labour to argue that the necessities of government which drive them to borrow money will depress the funds. This principal is in every body's mouth. Then the only question is when shall we have done with taxing and funding, that the stocks may have some respite, and rise to their natural par, whatever it be? Certainly not 'till the outstanding debt is either funded, or discharged by the surplus of the establishment; as to discharging the outstanding debt by the surplus, that is out of sight, because the plan for the year 1768, will require such an anticipation of the sinking fund, that the land-tax, malt tax, and sinking fund in the year 1769, will be but barely enough for the current service of 1769, so unless we are to sit down contented with 1800,000*l.* exchequer bills outstanding, and a considerable navy debt, even this year, will, by no means bring us to an end of taxing and funding.

If the advice which put administration upon passing by the outstanding debt for the sake of buying out the redeemable 4 *per cents.* came from stock jobbers and brokers, it was wisely done on their part, as it has secured to them the transacting of loans, and lotteries, for so many years longer; whereas if we had gone to the foundation

at

at first, I am apt to think that one loan might have done the business, and that a few redeemable 4 *per cents*, might have been reduced by a simple subscription of assent to the reduction, upon the same plan, as more than 50 Millions were in 1749 and 1750, but this would not have answered the purpose of the middle men, so that I shall expect none of them to second the proposition of bringing the modern system of annual loans to an end; however I stand upon the arguments in the case, which I think must receive no small confirmation from the ill success of the opposite system.

If the true principles for restoring public credit, consist in keeping the hands of government free, I suppose the same must be it's best protection from future danger. If war did not bring on it's consequences, the inevitable necessity of borrowing money, I should be at a loss to find any reason why the stocks should be so much more affected in their value, by any appearance of hostilities than any other part of national property; the more apparent and imminent the necessity is of borrowing in that case, the more severely would public credit feel the shock, therefore we can never hope to look such an event in the face with any confidence, till we have sufficient resources in hand. A sinking fund half a year in advance, instead of a monstrous arrear, together with a navy debt clear, would so far put us upon a respectable footing; but above all the discharge of the exchequer bills, which remain from the late war, is the most essential measure, as affording the most copious resource of ready money at a moment's notice, upon the first appearance of danger, without the necessity of borrowing upon funds. The value of this expedient as the readiest way to supply immediate demands without a loan is well known from their eminent use, when the funds were hard run at the pinch of the last war; if these bills were discharged, so that it might be known both at home and abroad, that we had a resource in hand of 2 or 3 millions in this article, at a moment's notice, and if besides we might ever hope to see the sinking fund free or in advance, these added to a 4th shilling upon land, which is ready to be voted upon emergence, might constitute a fund of 4 or 5 millions to be set in the front of danger, as the shield and defence of public credit.

E

I do

I do not put the argument upon this footing to suggest any alarm that war is at hand, but as it makes a part of the question how to uphold public credit, and to assign the cause, why the funds are not now in as flourishing state as they were in the late peace, viz. between 1749 and 1755. For it is not only the continual distress and borrowing on the part of government from year to year, but the obvious inference from the present system, that if we postpone the outstanding debt, and waste the operations of each session upon non-essential objects, to the neglect of weightier matters, an evil day may come upon us unprepared, and we may have to begin a new war, before we have wiped out the score of the last. This surely is sounding no false alarm, for in all human affairs, the most likely way to prevent an evil, is to be prepared for it.

In pace ut sapiens aptabit idonea bello.

I am aware that preaching up general doctrines of oeconomy against arrears, anticipations, &c. will pass for the customary language of opposition, for which reason I lay my finger upon a specific measure, viz. the paying off the outstanding exchequer bills, which I rank the very foremost among the *Idonea bello*; and I urge this now, because the proposed plan for this year, is calculated without any consideration of the outstanding debt, nor yet is this all, but the funds are already so far in arrear, and must be so much farther anticipated, that the ways and means for 1769 forth coming within the year, will be but barely sufficient to support the current establishment, so that upon the issue of this question it is to be determined, whether we will adjourn the reduction of the outstanding debt, and by consequence, the support and protection of public credit for two years to come.

The revenue of this country is enough, and more than enough, to supply all the demands of the current establishment liberally and largely. If the other departments of the state can be put upon a responsible footing, we need not fear the revenue failing when once settled, but 'till that be done, we stand upon very precarious ground; guard that point, and we are invulnerable. We will take France
and

and Spain and lead them about our camp, they will find nothing that shall tempt them to disturb the rights, or to rouse the resentments of this country. You have a half million land-tax in hand, you may issue two or three millions, or even more of exchequer bills at a moment's command, you may stand the first gust of war, without shaking public credit, and if the storm blows over (which will be the more likely event if this country be in a state of prudent preparation, for I cannot think that France is less exhausted by the late war than ourselves) you need not come to borrow at all; and having shewn that we dare assert our rights, we may brush off a few exchequer bills, and set ourselves ready for the next event. When we have the freshness of our credit untouched, we may speak out, but as things are at present, I am sure I would not be the adviser of a language too peremptory, though I do not reckon myself in general an advocate for timid measures, but I should reason thus, that the serious appearance of hostilities would alarm, and not without reason, the stockholders; that a fall of 10 or 20 *per cent.* upon the stocks, would in fact, make the first blow, cost us as many Millions, and what still is worse, that blow not given but received. Guard the public credit against the first blow, and we are certainly in no other part more vulnerable than our neighbours: I do not say that any preparation can ensure the stocks from falling, through the course of a long war, but let them down gently, and they will escape breaking. No human power or policy can make war not to be an evil, but it is an evil in common to all parties, and the best way to stave it off, is to shew that you are prepared, and not to tempt an enemy, by exposing the vulnerable part. War may come upon us like a thief in the night, and for one I should be loth to stand responsible for the fate of this country, without some measure ready provided in case of such an event. An hundred and thirty millions of English property, is a very serious concern to depend upon the smiles and courtesy of France or Spain. But if by having copious and ready resources at hand, you are prepared to repel the first attack, France or Spain might perhaps think twice of the matter, before they ventured to provoke another exhausting war.

(20)

The only footing that I should think it by any means safe for this country to stand upon, with regard to the great national events of war and peace, is, to discharge all the arrears of the late war to the utmost farthing, that public credit might once more lift up its head in safety; and to keep sufficient resources in hand, to turn aside those evils, which by human prudence may be averted, but at all events to break the blow.

January, 1768.

F I N I S.

PREPARING FOR THE PRESS,

Of which Proofs as large will shortly be delivered,

THE BARONETAGE of ENGLAND; being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the **BARONETS**, from their first Institution, in the Reign of King James I. to the present Time. With all the Coats of Arms, accurately and finely engraved.

Printed for J. ALMON, opposite Burlington-House in Piccadilly.

Of whom may be had,

A New Edition of the Royal Calendar for the Year 1768; Price, with an Almanack, 2s. 9d. without 2s.

